

Communes" - the "Basic Unit of Chinese Society"Their Tasks are

The first direct reference to the existence of "communes" in China appears to have occurred in a New China News Agency report of 11/7/58 dealing with an inspection tour which Pao Tse-tung in the province of Shantung in the course of which he said the "chillings people's commune" in Shantung is "a model commune" and should have been "merged" with several other communes. Following Mao's visit to Shantung, industry, commerce, agriculture, culture and education, the military forces of the province, the forces of the whole people should be organized to form the basic units of our society. A report dated 11/10/58, his visit to Shantung, Shantung, flour mills, cotton fields, etc. Mao Tse-tung, 1st Secretary of the CCP and Provincial Governor, and said "in a cheerful prospect. When the whole province is like that".

The same day (11/8/58) NCM also carried a special People's Daily article by Tan Chen-lin, member of the CCP Politbureau, on the lessons to be learned from China's experience in the summer harvest, in which he summarized Mao's concept of the "people's commune":

Comrade Pao Tse-tung has said that we should, step by step, in good order, organize "industry, agriculture, commerce, education, culture and education, the military forces (the militia, the armed forces of the whole people) and the communes to form the basic units of our society. We are now beginning to merge cooperatives into bigger ones to meet the objective needs of the great leap forward. This is in line with the guiding ideas of Comrade Pao Tse-tung. The traditional cooperatives, since they have bought tractors, motor cars and new farm tools, and have sponsored factories, schools, clinics, broadcasting centres, middle schools, hospitals, etc. and co-operatives. Specialised departments for industry, commerce, water conservancy, technique, culture and public health have been added to the leading organs of some co-operatives. There has been an unprecedented upsurge of enthusiasm for socialist construction among the masses, particularly during the great leap forward in agriculture. Groups of activists, devoted to socialist construction, have begun to form. They are not only the backbone in carrying out the Party's general line of building up socialism, but also the main factor in leading the 500 million peasants from pure physical labour to the higher stage of communism, in which physical and mental labour are combined. All these new people, and these new events, emerging under the brilliance of Comrade Mao's ideas, represent the great mobilization of the 500 million peasants to build socialism, to build the country and to march towards Communism".

On 12/8 NCM reported that on 11/7 during the course of his inspection tour in Shantung Mao Tse-tung had said the superiority of the cooperatives lay in the fact that they had set up people's communes because they combined industry, agriculture, commerce, culture and education and the military forces and it was therefore easy for them to give guidance".

Background:

Indications that something of this nature has been effected for some time can be deduced from reports which appeared in

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People's Daily on 22/7/58. "Can manpower be increased?"; which contained the following paragraph:

"Recently a number of measures to solve the manpower shortage have been found by various localities. For instance, measures for the better distribution of manpower resorted to by the industrial departments and cities have proved rather effective. These measures include the reorganization of specialised work brigades into general work brigades, suitable adjustment of the working period of seasonal workers, strengthening labour discipline to increase the attendance rate, mutual assistance between different enterprises to solve the problem of manpower, retrenchment of personnel in commercial and Government agencies and their reassignment to industrial departments, improvement of the system of reserve workers, recruitment of the unemployed in cities to take part in production, and the adoption of the half-work half-study system in secondary schools. However, the most effective method is to organise large-scale collective economic undertakings and involve the workers' dependants and city residents from doing household chores so that they may take part in socialist construction". (Peking radio 21/7/58).

Earlier still, in a special article on the role of women as labour power for production in the "forward leap", NCM on July 5 quoted the Peking Daily description of the emancipation of women from household work, and the organization of more public services as an essential, indispensable part of socialist transformation and construction. It said that socialist ownership of production demanded "organization" of the way of life. The establishment of more public canteens, laundries, nurseries and other facilities would not only make a great saving in labour power but also change people's attitudes. The present recommendations involve the women in duties at baby-care centres, laundries, canteens, tailoring workshops, in road-building, tree-planting, ditch digging and other forms of public service. Performance of such duties is said to show a good Communist attitude and to be "a great beginning in the transformation towards communism of the traditional way of life of the old society."

On July 6 NCM described eight measures to be taken to overcome the manpower shortage in Shensi which had been promulgated by the Shensi CWP Committee. These eight measures include training each worker in more than one field of work; organizing consolidated labour teams covering several trades; the improvement of tools and equipment; strengthening of labour discipline; mutual assistance in manpower between enterprises, employment of some workers in part-time administrative work, and the employment of unemployed youths as apprentices.

The beginning of communal life in Tientsin was reported by Peking radio on July 8. It said that housewives in Tientsin are taking the lead in a movement to free women from household work to enable them to take part in cooperative farm production. They are now busy setting up a network of mutual aid-nurseries, tailors shops and flour mills. Throughout the Tientsin Administrative District 91% of the babies are being cared for in 7,000 nurseries and creches set up by housewives. More than 2,600 tailoring groups and 4,200 flour milling groups have been organized. And as a result 300,000 more of the region's women are now available for full time or part-time production work. Freed from household drudgery a growing number of formerly illiterate housewives are now learning to read and write and are studying technical and scientific knowledge. The same report went on to describe the freeing of women from household chores for production work and public service as part of the new socialist atmosphere in China's current big leap forward.

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On July 13 in the course of a special talk on the problem of labor in a high population density area, as to China's economy Peking radio reported - "In our socialist countries, people are our most important wealth and the source of greatest productivity"... China has no unemployment problems; she has even a shortage of manpower. As a result, we are launching a scientific, technical and cultural revolution to increase further the productive forces, so as to solve the manpower shortage. We are building children's parks, canteens, and sewing cooperatives on the outskirts of cities and other places so that the women can find time to go to work. The conditions such as these are unthinkable in the capitalist countries. In our country, although the population is large, there can never be enough people and people are forever the most valuable".

In a special article in Red Flag, Li Yi-po, Chairman of the State Economic Commission, pointed out that the material wealth of society is produced by working people and that in China while "everyone knows that our peasants provide our industry with grain and raw materials needed by light industry and constitute the largest domestic market in the world for industrial goods" yet "few know that our peasants also supply large amounts of raw materials for heavy industry... on whom do we rely for the mining of the raw materials? Mainly on the peasants. This has created a new situation and posed a new question too. From this we can see that if we want our industry to prosper, we must not only depend on the working class, but on the 500 million peasants as well". He went on to say that "if we develop industry and agriculture simultaneously we can mobilise the power of 500 million peasants, and we can develop industries run by both central and local authorities simultaneously we can mobilise the power of the people in all provinces and municipalities of the country. If we develop large, medium and small sized industries simultaneously, and use both native and foreign funds, we can both mobilise the power of those who have a higher standard of culture and technique and those who are not so outstanding in culture and technique. Hence, these various simultaneous developments are a great emancipation movement - a movement which mobilises all the positive elements to build our industries. It is a great revolution in the method of industrial construction".

The results of the implementation of the eight measures reported on July 6 in Shensi, referred to above, were given by Peking radio on July 14/56. This rather sinister report stated that an important system for the building of socialism had been evolved in Shensi which had organised a huge labour force of 3,650,000 men which can be used as workers, peasants or soldiers according to actual needs. This will also be of great help in solving the manpower shortage!

Are the Advantages of a Commune?

Members of the Chao Ying people's Commune in Shangcheng County in Henan district Honan (described on p13) summed up the advantages of the Commune as follows. They can:

- (1) consolidate collective ownership and develop collective consciousness;
- (2) build industry and agriculture so as to carry out the simultaneous development of industry and agriculture;
- (3) speed up the mechanisation of agriculture;
- (4) facilitate large-scale capital construction;

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- (v) facilitate the development of a many-sided economy because they have a greater population and rich resources;
 - (vi) permit the overall distribution of the labour force and training of large numbers of experts devoted to socialist construction because they have a strong concentrated core of capable members;
 - (vii) train large numbers of Government cadres and technical personnel in various fields;
 - (viii) energetically develop cultural work, communications and transport;
 - (ix) resist natural calamities better and more rapidly raise production levels and the standard of living;
 - (x) strengthen the leadership of the Communist Party in the communes.
- (MCA 18/8)

Establishment and Merging:

The CCP Committee of the Tsingyang Special District in Honan held a field conference between 29/7 and 5/8 at which the following recommendations concerning the establishing and consolidating of people's communes were made:

1. Size: should be "determined by the mountainous and plain areas, the irrigation system and the trend of economic development of the locality concerned. It should be decided through consultation with the masses in the interests of production. For this reason it can be big or small. Generally speaking, each people's commune should embrace a whole hsiang (administrative area comprising a number of villages), with its member households ranging from 5,000 to 10,000".
2. Public Funds and Grain Reserve: "all funds and reserves now held by various cooperatives should be handed over to the commune and NOT be concealed or shared privately by the cooperative members."
3. Liabilities of the commune should be handled as follows: Loans raised by agricultural cooperatives for production in previous years should be repaid by those cooperatives concerned. Loans raised this year by agricultural cooperatives whose autumn harvest will be distributed by the people's commune will be repaid by the commune. Loans raised by the cooperative for capital and public construction will be repaid by the commune.
4. Private plots: formerly reserved by individual cooperative members will be taken over by the operational units for the commune for cultivating grain or vegetables for the joint consumption of the commune members. This applies also to orchards and forests.
5. Household subsidiary production: members of the commune are "generally permitted to engage in subsidiary production. If they want to hand over their equipment to the commune for collective production, the commune should accept the equipment and pay a suitable price to its owner. In the future, commune members will be permitted to continue their household subsidiary production operations on a small scale".

Organisation

1. Administrative organs: "The organisational structure of the hsien government and the people's commune concerned are identical. There

will be one organisational structure and one tabulation of personnel. The head of the hsien will be concurrently the head of the people's commune, the secretary of the hsien C/P committee will be concurrently the secretary of the people's commune; the hsien people's congress will constitute the congress of the people's commune, and the hsien people's council will constitute the people's commune administrative committee.

There will be agriculture, water conservancy, forestry, animal husbandry, industry, communications, internal affairs, labour, armed security, finance, food, commerce, culture, and public health departments under the leadership of the administrative committee of each people's commune. This committee will also have a planning committee and a number of scientific research institutes. Under the leadership of the administrative committee, the various departments will handle their own fields of work and establish large, small, and specialised operational units according to production demands.

2. Limitation of authority:

- (a) Agriculture: "In the field of agriculture, the commune should divide its farmland into a number of cultivation areas and establish a corresponding number of cultivation teams according to the requirements of production, water supplies, and the quality of soil, for the full development of the potential of its land. In addition, it should also suitably distribute its manpower, draught animals and farm tools according to production requirements. The various large and small operational units will be responsible for the management of their own cultivation."
- (b) Industry: "In the field of industry, a division of administrative authority should be carried out according to the principles of centralised leadership, unified planning, divided control at different levels, close co-ordination between industrial and agricultural production, full utilisation of favourable topographical conditions, and the easy supply of raw materials from local sources. All industrial enterprises which require big investments, large numbers of workers and more advanced technical standards, and which yield very substantial profits, should be controlled by the people's commune; all enterprises which require smaller investments, which cannot be properly placed under centralised control, and which can be operated by a large operational unit, should be controlled by the latter; and all enterprises which can be operated by small operational units and which are very beneficial to agricultural production should be handled by the small operational units concerned."
- (c) Forestry: "All major forests and orchards, owned jointly by several large operational units, should be controlled by specialised units organised by the people's commune. Common forests in general should be controlled by specialised teams set up by large operational units. Small forests and trees surrounding farmland should be controlled by persons specially assigned by small operational units."
- (d) Animal husbandry: "Large animal husbandry farms should be controlled by the people's commune and small animal husbandry farms by large operational units, according to the principle of co-ordinating agricultural, forestry and animal husbandry production properly."
- (e) Fisheries: "Fish ponds should be controlled by the people's commune, by large operational units, and by small operational units, according to the sizes of the ponds concerned."
- (f) Subsidiary production: "Small operational units should be encouraged to raise hogs, rabbits, chickens, ducks, bees, and other items. To develop the enthusiasm of these units in subsidiary

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production, the method of dividing profits between the commune, the large operational units, and the small operational units concerned and the method of conferring awards on meritorious units should be adopted."

(g) Culture and public health: "All regular educational institutions should be controlled by the people's commune, and all spare-time schools may be controlled by the large or small operational units concerned. All cinema projection teams, theatres, scientific research institutes, and major exhibition halls and libraries should be controlled by the people's commune."

3. Administrative authority: "The people's commune should:

- (a) set annual and quarterly production targets;
- (b) assign annual and quarterly construction tasks;
- (c) should not set targets in too great detail; and
- (d) targets should be flexible and leave room for change or condition targets are fulfilled.

"For example, in agricultural production the people's commune should stipulate only the total production as well as the output and the production targets of each principal crop as wheat, maize, cotton and oil-bearing crops. The large and small productive operational units should be given the authority to choose the plots of land for the cultivation of their crops and to raise non-staple crops at their own discretion so as to develop fully the productive potential of the land and to meet more properly the needs of the masses in livelihood."

4. Financial control: "The people's commune should:

- (a) formulate unified investment plans;
- (b) use and control the various types of funds by the other methods: of contract, allocation of funds according to plan and of supplying materials in lieu of money, according to actual circumstances.

"For example, the people's commune may adopt the contract system with regard to administrative expenditure and the other more or less regular expenditures for the repair of minor farm machines, for raising animals, and for the procurement of chemical fertilisers, and adopt the method of planned supply in relation to fixed or non-regular investments, such as investments in the manufacture of insecticides and in industrial or agricultural capital construction."

5. Labour control: "The commune should formulate a unified labour control plan, suitably organise the co-ordinated co-operation between the various large production operational units and between the various operational units, factories, and mines. Control of labour within the various operational units, factories, and mines should be handled by the unit authorities without the intervention of the commune for the development of the initiative and the enthusiasm of units concerned."

The people's commune should formulate, according to a unified standard, different operational sequences and labour productivity quotas for different productive units. However, following the advent of new inventions and creations and the change of production situations resulting from the advancement of operational skills, the commune should

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permit the various units to change the standard operational sequences as well as some of the existing rules and regulations detrimental to the development of production."

6. Trading organizations:

(i) Supply and marketing department must be established to "handle the marketing of the products of the commune and supply of necessities. The basic function of this department is to act as a procurement and marketing agent for State-operated commerce. The rate of profit to be earned by this department should be decided by the State-operated commercial organ concerned, according to the principle of setting it at a level slightly above the operational expenses of the department."

The supply and marketing department is an independent unit as regards its accounts. The commune will be responsible for its profits and losses. Its capital is made by the share funds formerly submitted by the commune members for the establishment of the supply and marketing co-operative, plus some funds provided by the commune, when necessary. This department will set up a number of business centres at the various large operational units and at some relatively remote areas for the supply of minor daily necessities and sundries, and materials needed for production, for the convenience of the masses."

(ii) Credit department will handle:

- (a) savings accounts of members;
- (b) regulate floating funds of commune;
- (c) act as agent for State Bank;
- (d) settle non-cash accounts between commune and the economic units;
- (e) settle non-cash accounts between different units with the commune;
- (f) will NOT handle non-cash transaction between individual members.

(iii) Grain procurement: The commune will exercise full authority in the distribution and storing of its grain.

(iv) Taxation: "As the top-level authority in financial affairs within its hsiang, the commune will guarantee the fulfillment of its tax-paying duties according to State regulations, and keep the remaining income itself".

(v) Distribution: Various localities may adopt different distribution systems according to the actual conditions in different localities - there are three distribution systems in operation.

- (a) "Two preliminary distributions, followed by one final settlement of accounts, are conducted each year";
- (b) "Predetermined wages are paid to the commune members according to the contribution of labour";
- (c) "Commune members are paid basic wages plus bonuses".

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(vi) Predetermined wages: The system of paying pre-determined wages, according to the contribution of labour requires: (a) predetermination of pay for each man-day of labour; (b) issue of pay according to the number of man-days of labour contributed. The drawback is that it may induce a productive operational unit to fix the number of man-days of labour required for the fulfilment of a task as low as possible in order to get more pay for each man-day of labour. To overcome this the commune must assign tasks to its productive operation units on an annual basis, predetermine the pay for each man-day of labour on the basis of the amount of production, and impose stern control over the fulfilment of a labour quota on the part of the members of each operational unit. In addition the commune must maintain a reasonable ratio between the pay for labour contributed to agriculture, industrial and subsidiary production in order to avoid discord between members engaged in different types of labour, thereby adversely affecting the practice of paying according to the contribution of labour.

(vii) Basic Wages plus Bonus: This system of paying according to the contribution of labour in relations to wages means that in the distribution of grain the commune must keep all grain held back in accordance with State regulations, for the consumption of its members under its control. On the basis of this grain reserve it will issue coupons to members according to individual consumption standards. Members will then pay for grain consumed in mass halls with coupons instead of money. This system therefore calls for classification of labour into several grades; and secondly, determination of wages for each grade. Approximately 80% of total wage for a task should be distributed to members on a monthly basis in the form of a basic wage and the remaining 20% used as bonuses.

Bonus distribution: In agriculture the commune is to control 50% of the bonus fund, large operational units 30% and small operation units 20%; in industry and other forms of production the commune will control 60%, and factories and mines 40%. The purpose of the fund is to keep the pay of members of different operational units somewhat in balance. In addition collective and individual bonuses will be issued to the various operation units, factories and mines at the end of each year according to the extent by which they have fulfilled their production plans. Distribution of bonuses will be according to grade which will control the amount received. The number of members granted bonuses should account for from 40% to 60% of the total number of members.

- Qualifications for receipt of bonuses: Members must be:
- (a) obedient to leadership and work enthusiastically;
 - (b) actively participate in production and fulfil or overfulfil production quotas according to specified quality and within the specified period (norms);
 - (c) love and protect public property and struggle against evil personalities and evil practices at all times;
 - (d) think progressively, study hard for technical advancement and play a leading role in the technical innovation movement;
 - (e) work at least 28 days a month.

Those fulfilling these conditions will receive a bonus.

Those not enthusiastic in production, lazy, or who are inclined to be absent from work without proper reasons should be re-educationally criticised or issued basic wages at a discount or with the approval of the large operational unit concerned or the commune be demoted in their wage grades.

Special bonus arrangements are provided for work in exceptional circumstances: extraordinary achievements by members in face of disasters which result in reduction in a minimum of the damage is to be suitably rewarded; damage suffered because of a lack of proper sense of responsibility must be punished.

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Reserve funds are to be accumulated out of wages of members during a bumper season in order to provide a means of meeting requirements in lean years.

Communes adopting the basic wage plus bonus system must have the following qualifications:

- (a) members are strong believers in collectivization and high socialist consciousness and are in the habit of contributing voluntary labour;
- (b) have increased production substantially, improved economic conditions, developed production surely and steadily and possess substantial reserve funds;
- (c) enjoy a higher standard of income and have surpassed well-to-do middle peasants in living standards on the average.

The Party and the Commune

"The key to the consolidation and development of people's communes lies in the strengthening of Party leadership and in the work of developing the people's communes into combatting fortresses of the Party. Tasks to be implemented to this end include:

- (1) Establishment of Strong Party Organs: Each commune should establish a Party Committee which should include as its principal responsible cadres of the commune. The Committee should have a secretary, deputy secretary, an organizational department, a propaganda department, a supervisory committee and a staff office. Subordinate organs within the commune will have their own branch Party committee of sizes appropriate to level of the organ. Organs of the CYCL and CWF should also be established correspondingly.
- (2) Party leadership and activity to be strengthened: "The CWP committee and its branches should include responsible administrative cadres. All major tasks should first be studied and decided upon by the CWP committee or its branches before being carried out... Criticism and self-criticism should be conducted regularly within the Party to surmount all evil tendencies, to pursue the struggle between the two roads, to popularise the proletarian stand, to condemn the bourgeois stand, to establish a firm and strong Communist ideology, and to enable each and every CWP member to become a vanguard on the production and cultural fronts."
- (3) Party-building work to be intensified: "To meet the needs of the tremendous forward leaps to be achieved in production and construction, CWP committees at various levels should truly intensify Party-building work. In this connection, they should formulate Party-building plans, train a number of Party-building cadres, and enroll a number of new Party members with good qualifications. During this year, Party organs should be established in all productive operational units and in all sizeable factories and mines."
- (4) Cadre Training: "Communes of relatively large size should have a CWP cadre school or corresponding large-scale training center. The secretary, CWP cadres for large operational units should generally be former directors or deputy directors of small teams or former directors of agricultural cooperatives."

"An effort should be made to create present and future 'schools properly to cultivate experimental farms, experts and to strengthen theoretical and cultural studies and to raise the political standards of the commune cadres. Large numbers of both 'red and expert' activists should be trained to consolidate their Communist stand, to raise their standards of Communist consciousness, to keep in

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close touch with the masses, to study hard in their own line of work, and to develop the Communist courage to think, speak and act boldly.

(5) Political, Ideological and Educational Work: Party organs should place the trend of thought of the commune members under their control at all times. These party organs should pursue the struggle between the advanced and the backward, should support and exalt the more advanced units and individuals. They should educate "commune members with the proper relationship between the State and the commune as well as between the commune and its members in an effort to surmount the remnant bourgeois ideology among commune members".

Experiences of Pioneer Communes:

The chief communes which have received publicity are those of Weihsing, Red Flag, and Chaoying. But before reviewing the details given about these individual communes it is worth recording the progress made in general in two of the three provinces in which the "commune experiment" is being carried on.

Honan People's Daily on 18/8/58 carried a front page report on the movement to establish people's communes with particular reference to progress in the Hsinyang district in Honan. It said that the beginning of the commune movement in this district should be regarded as a landmark showing that China's agricultural cooperative system is beginning to take a big step forward - a social transformation leading from socialism to communism.

It stated that in April this year, the merging of small cooperatives into big ones began in Sulping and Pingyu Counties in the Hsinyang Special District; a cooperative comprising 6,000 to 7,000 households was set up in each county. By the end of July the merging of all 3,376 cooperatives was completed in the main and 208 people's communes had been formed, each with an average of about 8,000 households.

The transformation followed the big leap forward in all fields made by the people in the District in the past year. In the midst of the upsurge for the construction of irrigation projects and production, large-scale mutual assistance and cooperation was carried out between the various rural districts and agricultural cooperatives. In the struggle for bumper harvests, the masses of the people realized the great strength of the collective in changing nature, developing production and improving the people's livelihood. At the same time they also realized that small cooperatives could not meet the requirements of the big leap forward in various fields but had become an obstacle to the development of the productive forces. Therefore, to change the existing relations of production became an urgent demand of the masses of the people. It was in these circumstances that the people's communes were established.

Examples of the type of project which had proved the superiority of the commune over the cooperative included: the former No. 3 Hsien Tung cooperative now part of the Weihsin commune, had originally only 270 households and had 20 hectares of hilly land which for lack of manpower could not be planted with trees; after the establishment of the commune, 3,000 people were organized and afforestation work completed in 7 days. Previously it had taken 3 former cooperatives six years to carry out afforestation work on over 2,600 hectares, after the commune was formed 3,666 hectares were covered with trees in a week.

Also in the Hsinyang Special District 300,000 people have been organized into small iron and steel industrial units. They work in shifts round the clock to ensure the production of 800,000 tons of iron and 200,000 tons of steel this year.

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Similarly an agricultural implements reform movement is now sweeping the area with the main emphasis on equipping farm tools with ball bearings. Half a million people have been organised to complete the work in 2 weeks by turning out 150,000 sets of ball bearings a day.

While these new activities are in progress the other members of the communes continue to concentrate on field operations to ensure bumper autumn harvests.

These communes have used their own funds to set up supply and marketing departments and stores, primary and middle schools, secondary and technical schools and even colleges. They have their own local militia and their own armed forces.

The commune is no longer of the character of an agricultural cooperative but a basic social unit composed of workers, peasants, traders, students and militia. Corresponding changes and improvements have had to be made in the management and system of distribution because all means of production and the entire labour force are placed under unified distribution and use in accordance with the principle of unified management. All spheres of production and other activities, such as industry, agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, side occupations, marketing and supply, credit, culture, public health and communications come under the unified management of the commune which works out production plans and carries out the distribution of incomes. (NCNA 18/8).

On 21/8 NCNA said of the communes in the Haiyang Special District that:

"following the establishment of people's communes, the people have become disciplined by the large-scale collective labour system. Tremendous changes have taken place in their moral views, state of consciousness and living habits. As a result, public mess halls, nurseries and sowing teams have mushroomed everywhere. At present, more than 37,000 people's public mess halls have been established in the whole special district. In 7 centres public mess halls have become almost the only place for people to have meals. These new developments have not only changed the ideological consciousness of the people and the relationship between men and men, but also greatly promoted the progress of industrial and agricultural production as well as the development of the technical and cultural revolution in the area. However, the people's commune is still a new thing. It requires a series of changes in the control of production and in the system of distribution.

Also referring to developments in the Haiyang Special District NCNA on 21/8/58 reported that a few days after the establishment of the Yinghsiang people's commune in Chuohsien County, members completed deep ploughing on over 1,000 mu of dry land and weeding in all its maize, cotton and millet fields.

In the Shengyu people's commune in Pingyu County, four months after its establishment commune members set up from scratch 167 factories. The total production value of these factories amounts to 215,000 yuan. In addition, commune members completely dredged in 3 days and nights 2 canals 15 li long and 40 metres wide. They also opened an agricultural university.

HOPEI

In Hopei all cooperatives in H Hsichai County were converted into people's communes in the first half of August. On 4/8 Mao inspected this county and greatly inspired the enthusiasm of the people to march towards communism, according to Peking radio of 18/8. After he left

the villagers staged a special festival and said "Chairman Mao came on happiness came with him". After the mass movement for opening communes developed throughout the country. The public mess halls, sewing centres, child care centres, old age welfare institutes, which had developed rapidly everywhere in recent months have become components of the communes. Since the work has been replaced completely by collective social welfare measures, 69,000 women in the county have been liberated from household and become a reinforcement on the agricultural and industrial production fronts. An organization for production, division of labour has been practised along the trade line (sic). Production management has been executed like military and battle operations. Labour has thus become much better organized and labour productivity has been raised. Militia duties are also fulfilled. To expand the present small-scale communes into large-scale people's communes, in which industrial workers, peasants, merchants, scholars and soldiers are integrated, Hsuehsien County on 15/8 merged its 20 hsiang and towns into 9 larger hsiang and towns, thus effecting a full integration of political and economic life, a flying leap forward in production, a march in great stride on socialist construction towards communism. (Peking 18/8).

Weihsing People's Commune:

The Weihsing people's commune in Sui County, Hohen was formed last April with the merging of 27 agricultural cooperatives, consisting of over 9,300 households with 3,000 members, divided into 37 production brigades.

The merger took place because of the increasing demands of industrial construction, the need for improving the people's livelihood further and to solve shortcomings involving manpower and materials.

Achievements since the formation of the commune include more extensive fertilising of the fields resulting in a fourfold increase in this year's wheat yields; and, if possible, with further improvement of soil and water conditions to achieve a target of 3,000 catties per mu for all autumn crops. A plan was drawn up to establish 360 small factories during the 1st IYP and this plan has been overfulfilled by the setting up of 1,100 factories which are now in production. Production brigades with facilities for irrigation have increased from 2 to 15 and 100 irrigation and livestock farms have been set up. In addition 23 supply and marketing departments and several sales agencies are now in existence to serve members. Primary schools have been increased from 12 to 15 and an experimental industrial agricultural institute and a technical middle school have been set up. Other facilities provided by the commune include 21 libraries, and recreation clubs, 4 basketball fields, 250 communal mess halls, several nurseries and kindergartens, and 20 amateur singing and theatrical troupes. Finally a 2,400 strong militia has been organized to protect industry and agriculture.

This means the nature of the cooperative has been changed to a basic unit composed of peasants, workers, students and militia.

All means of production and the labour force in the commune are now under unified administration and utilization in accordance with the principle of unified management. All spheres of production and activities, such as industry, agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, subsidiary occupations, marketing and supply, culture and education, public health and communications are under the unified management of the commune which will organize, plan and coordinate all production brigades and teams as it deems necessary to meet production needs and develop organizational initiative.

...all purchases, ... financial matters ... production were taken ... supply, marketing ... credit departments. The success of the commune system has ... for the difficult ... production assignments ... successfully. (Peking)

Orthodoxy of the new units:

... their ... policy concerning the origins ... towards communism in China ... correctness of this policy. ... People's Daily by Lin Chen- ... his correct basis for

All genuine science develops in accordance with the progress made in practice. The all-conquering strength of Marxism-Leninism lies in its respect for practice and for the laws of objectivity. Comrade Mao Tse-tung has creatively developed Marxism-Leninism by his theories on the correct handling of contradictions among the people and on the question of working methods having to adapt themselves to changing circumstances and by the Party's general line for socialist construction which he put forward. All this has emancipated the thinking of our people, revealing inexhaustible strength. This is a brilliant example of the combination of the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism with concrete practice in China's socialist construction. The development of our socialist construction is proving fully, and will continue to prove, the correctness and precision of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's foresight."

By 22/8/58 NCPA was able to state that among the Marxist works recently published by the Chinese People's University was: "On Communist Communes"; a collection of excerpts from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on the organization and structure of Communist communal life.

Comment:

The development of the system of people's communes negates the existence of the individual and of the family unit and submerges them beneath the tide of communism. People are no longer permitted to do their own cooking, sewing and laundering, their children are locked away in nurseries and the only place where the family can meet is the "commune home" is for sleeping, although even this is conditional on the production needs of the commune and whether or not one of the adults is on night shift. Otherwise family meetings can only take place during meals at the public center, at public meetings and in recreational activities organized and sponsored by the commune.

Particular points of interest are charge from the reports so far available on the commune system.

Their aim is to transform the traditional way of life towards communism: "a great beginning in the transformation towards communism from the traditional way of life of old society".

The system is reminiscent of the "Bavists" in the sense that it is "total" in the sense that it is a system for convenience of administration during a time of ... every aspect of life was controlled by the Central Government ... its army through local administrative bodies comprising all sectors of the population in which peasants, rural workers, handicrafts workers predominated and were ... representation, the ... including the teachers, doctors and technicians. Everything was geared to the agrarian economy.

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"Under each district Soviet, and appointed by it, were committees for education, cooperatives, military training, political training, land, public health, partisan training, revolutionary defence, enlargement of the Red Army, agrarian mutual aid, Red-Army land tilling, and others. Such Committees were found in every branch organ of the Soviets, right up to the Central Government where policies were co-ordinated and State decisions made". (Edgar Snow: Red star over China p 224).

(c) In accordance with the usual CCP practice the new system has been in operation for an experimental period prior to receiving official publicity as a new policy, to be applied throughout the length and breadth of China.

(d) The establishment of this system is obviously one of the outcomes of the de-centralisation policy, first discussed by the Party in 1956, which aimed at making local Governments accept more responsibility and reducing the burden on the Central Government, but in such a way that no loss of Central control is involved.

(e) The advantages to the State of this new system include:

(1) the ending of disparity of living standards and similar contradictions between the workers and peasants, which has caused considerable unrest and dissatisfaction, particularly in the rural areas, in recent years. The merging of peasants, workers, trades people, students and soldiers into one organisation, equipped with machinery to iron out such contradictions and disparities as have existed previously, with the aid of mass criticism and self-criticism, should eliminate some of the causes of and most of the expressions of dissatisfaction.

(ii) it will ease the administrative problems, especially those concerned with transport and communications, as each commune will become largely self-sufficient.

(iii) it will ease the economic burden of the State. It has been made quite clear in recent months that it is now the responsibility of the masses to provide their own schools and hospitals, to establish their own enterprises to help the State construction programme, as the State cannot afford to carry out any additional educational, welfare and cultural services than the allocations of 4,184 million yuan in the 1958 Budget (as opposed to 4,739 million yuan in the 1957 Budget); most of the Budget allocations are for Heavy Industry and other industrial developments. It also appears that demands for State loans or subsidies will be met only in exceptional circumstances where major items of equipment or raw materials, or other supplies are needed for large-scale projects of which the Government approves. As a result there will be a material increase in productivity and development of educational, welfare and cultural institutions without an equal drain on the Central Government's funds.

(iv) The establishment of the central control of the existing labour force within the communes means the establishment of a labour force of considerable mobility. The projects carried out so far by the pioneer communes show clearly not only the mobility of the labour force in China but its versatility too. The report from Shensi of the establishment of a labour force in that Province alone of some 1,600,000 men which can be used as workers, peasants, or soldiers according to actual needs says that this will be of great help to the government in solving the manpower shortage. It is a sinister indication of the ability of the CPA to be able to fill at a moment's notice an enormous army, or to turn a huge labour force to a particular project which could have serious repercussions on the international plane.

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(f) Apart from the loss of individuality and of normal family life in the accepted sense, the average member of a commune has to face certain other deprivations of rights:

(i) he loses his right to ownership of a vegetable plot, or a portion of an orchard, a small fish pond or other similar land rights;

(ii) he will only receive 80% of the total wage earned for any particular work done, as the remaining 20% will be kept back by the commune, or by its subsidiary organs as relevant, to form a bonus fund. The number of members within a commune to be granted bonuses is restricted to from 40% to 60% of the total number of members. From the 80% wage there will be deductions for tax, welfare levies and other funds started by the commune. Also there is no guarantee that the remaining remuneration will take the form of cash. It is specifically stated that the communes must keep a grain reserve on the basis of which it will issue grain coupons to its members; these coupons must be used as payment for grain consumed in the public mess halls. Meat and vegetables, etc., must be paid for in cash, however.

(iii) Eligibility for receipt of bonuses is conditional on fulfilment of five basic conditions and other general stipulations. Should any member of a production team fail in his duties the rest of the team will suffer because they have not shown a proper sense of mutual responsibility.

(iv) Failure to meet the standards required by the commune is punishable by educational criticism, decreased wages, or demotion in wage grade.

(g) The system of communes represents a further extension of the State control machinery. It consolidates still further the grip of the State and Party over the individual; it reduces his importance to the level of one among 300,000. What chances have the views of one man against those of the adults of 8,000 households in the average commune?

"Bourgeois individualism is the source of all evils and the big enemy of Communism. Without doing away with individualism, we cannot build up communism". In this statement, made by Liu Ning-yi, to the 8th Executive Committee of the All China Federation of Trade Unions, lies the crux of the present drive towards communal life.

3.9.58.